

The Psychology of Influence

Session F-12 March 6, 2000 10:45am

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Psychological Insights to Enhance Presentation Effectiveness

Session objectives:

- Learn the three phases of creating change in others
 - Understand how brain physiology affects attention, learning, and memory
 - Enhance your knowledge of techniques that effect your credibility with the audience
 - Practice a preparation of mind and body for optimum presentation performance
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About the Speaker...

Scott W. Lee, Ph.D.

Scott is a clinical psychologist who has a private practice in Kirkland, WA, where he is also a speaker and consultant to business and community organizations. Scott understands well the nature of interpersonal influence within families or in larger groups, and shares these insights in presentations as well as written form. He has recently co-authored a book on presentations with Jim Endicott titled [The Presentation Survival Skills Guide](#) which is available through Distinction Publishing. When Scott is not seeing clients or presenting, he can often be found casting his cares upon the waters of northwest rivers, trying to persuade a different kind of audience to respond.

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The presenter has one significant goal above all others; alter the audience's behavior, attitudes, or beliefs. This task is to move the audience from where they are at mentally when they enter the auditorium to a different place at the end of their presentation.

Audience Influence

How have speakers traditionally attempted to influence an audience? The use of statistics, bullets, more data, undeniable proof, mechanics, techniques..., the list goes on and on. However, there is a more significant process that must be understood if you wish to have the optimum influence upon your audience. The audience must be ready to change, they must be in the "mood" to adapt a new understanding, to choose a new behavior, and you as the presenter must be the one to establish this readiness.

Secondly, after the audience is softened so that change may take place, the presenter must be clear about the direction that the audience is to take. Specifically, what is the task of the audience? When and how will they exhibit this new change and belief? How will they benefit personally from this new betterment?

Then, finally, speakers have forgotten that unless they finish their presentation correctly, the audience will soon return to its previous beliefs and behaviors. The final task of the speaker is to prevent this recidivism by solidifying the changes in the audience. The softened audience must once again become hardened, but this time retaining the newly acquired shape in response to the presentation.

Soften

The following approaches are helpful in the process of softening an audience.

Humor _____

Personal Stories _____

Latitude of Acceptance _____

Shape

Moving the audience to the desired change is most effectively done utilizing the right hemisphere of the brain.

Catch the audience's attention

- habituation _____
- primacy _____
- recency _____

Enhancing the credibility of the presenter

- perceived weakness strengthens presenter
- human connections, not mechanical
- bite-sized truths, not wow material

Responses that affect change

- compliments _____
- reinforcements _____
- attributions _____

Brain physiology and learning

- left brain
 - logical, sequential
 - analytic, data, factual
 - verbal, reading
 - computer-like
- right brain
 - feelings, impressions
 - holistic, imagistic
 - pictures, looking
 - gut-level

Utilizing the right, left differences for appropriate audience characteristics can greatly enhance connectivity (i.e. male or female, business or recreational, etc.).

Solidify

The task of the presenter is not finished until there is a likelihood that the new understandings or beliefs of the audience will continue into the future.

Vaccination

- inoculation of alternative beliefs
- partial refutation

Attribution Theory

- observational data
- tell it how you want it to be
- belief-system alteration

Participation

- behavioral involvement
- gradual withdrawal vs. cold-turkey

Visualization

- physical relaxation
- mental sensory awareness
- “programming” the physiological experience

Thanks for attending this presentation. Please pick one idea from the above lists that you would like to try in your next presentation and list it here: _____ . Have some fun!